

memorandum

DATE: December 5, 1991

REPLY TO
ATTN OF: Refuge Manager, Holla Bend NWR

SUBJECT: Trip Report (11/12-15, 1991)

TO: Associate Manager, FWS, Atlanta, GA (ARW/RF-1) *let*
Attn: Sam Drake

Comments concerning your trip report dated November 25, 1991:

Equipment:

Service emblems are missing on Jeep Cherokee because you and R.D. Pullium signed an authorization and L.E. issues an Arkansas vehicle tag to be used as an undercover vehicle.

Vehicle was dirty because of all the rain the previous days before your visit and our muddy roads.

Safety

I do carry all my needed equipment in the vehicle; my boots, rain gear, weapon, flashlight, tools, etc.

The radio is mounted at the only place in the vehicle where there was room, (6 years ago). Normally, no one else rides in the vehicle except the driver. The passenger seat does slide back and provides for more knee room.

L.E.

We have been working with all the gray bat experts on a gate system for Logan Cave. So far nothing that is economical or that would permit the bats to enter/exit. Maternal colonies of gray bats do not take well to gates. They usually leave the gated caves.



Buy U.S. Savings Bonds Regularly on the Payroll Savings Plan

Fisheries Management

If we permit year-around fishing in the old river channel, we will destroy the only open water resting area for Canada geese. As of today (Dec. 5) there are probably 6000 Canada geese roosting on the south side of the channel. I have attempted for 6 years to explain this situation to the R.O. in order to purchase the needed 450 acres around the channel to protect this important resting area.

Cropland Management

I have talked with ATTRA and they are hesitant to come and personally give a management plan. All they want to do is send out information of a general nature. It would help if you would send a request to Jim Lukins, Director of ATTRA for assistance.

Public Use

I agree with your statement "The fee areas should have some of our better facilities". If the R.O. can not fund the improvements, I would suggest that we discontinue the fee collection at Holla Bend.



Martin D. Perry
Refuge Manager

memorandum

DATE: November 25, 1991

REPLY TO
ATTN OF: Associate Manager, FWS, Atlanta, GA (ARW/RF-1)

SUBJECT: Trip Report

TO: Refuge Manager, Holla Bend National Wildlife Refuge

The annual supervisory visit to Holla Bend National Wildlife Refuge was made on November 12-15, 1991. This report documents findings and noteworthy items observed during this trip. Recommendations for implementation are included at the end of this report.

Refuge Objectives

The refuge objectives for both Holla Bend National Wildlife Refuge and Logan Cave National Wildlife Refuge are well defined and current. Refuge Manager Martin and his staff seem to be making good decisions in management of both refuges.

Administration and Budget

There are several budget needs that must be met in FY 1991. These are gravel for the entrance road to repair flood damages, a water line to the shop to correct a safety problem, repairs to the shop septic tank drainfield, repair of a deep well that provides water for flooding up to 100 acres of moist-soil impoundments, a replacement tractor and mower, a modular office at the refuge since we are losing our GSA space in Russellville, and funding a Partners project involving three private landowners adjoining the refuge.

Personnel

The staffing at Holla Bend refuge is adequate for the two refuges administered from this site. An aggressive volunteer program supplements the refuge staff during archery hunts, eagle hacking, deer collecting and necropsies, etc. Refuge Manager Perry received a complimentary note from Regional Director Pulliam complimenting the refuge volunteer program.

Facilities

An onsite office is desperately needed. The equipment storage shed and warehouse have been significantly improved with the funding provided in FY 1991. The interior of buildings

(including the leased office in Russellville) appeared neater and better organized this trip.

Equipment

Many of the refuge vehicles are showing signs of age and off-road use. A replacement vehicle ordered in FY 1990 has still not been received. Service emblems were missing on the vehicle driven by Refuge Manager Perry and tattered and faded on several of the other vehicles. They need to be properly marked with recognizable Service decals. The Refuge Manager's vehicle was dirty and dusty inside and out. It needs to be kept cleaner for our public image.

Safety

Refuge Manager Perry's vehicle had considerable equipment and supplies on the dash, in the glove compartment, and behind the rear seat. These could become missiles in a wreck. Also, the radio mounted on the passenger side does not allow adequate knee room and would cause injuries in a wreck.

Law Enforcement

Considerable effort is expended monitoring the activities of hunters during the refuge archery hunt. Overall, there are no serious enforcement problems at Holla Bend National Wildlife Refuge. At Logan Cave National Wildlife Refuge, unauthorized entry may still be occurring. We probably need to place grates of proper dimensions over the cave entrances which will keep people out but allow the bats to enter and exit.

Fire Management

The refuge has approved prescriptions to burn off fields. A new 4-wheeler is needed to replace the old 3-wheeler used to monitor firelines.

Wildlife Management

Considerable effort is expended necropsying deer and collecting parts for researchers during the refuge archery hunt. This should be phased out (unless researchers man the check station) and a self-checking system be implemented. At the present time, hunters are not allowed to field dress the deer.

Fisheries Management

The refuge does not have ownership or total management control over the Arkansas River and Oxbow Lake adjoining our boundary. Therefore, fishing is allowed where we can provide access on a seasonal basis. Possibly, we should consider allowing year-around fishing on the river.

At Logan Cave, the entire program is geared toward providing the Ozark cavefish the protection and habitat it needs.

Habitat Management

Attempts have been made in the past to plant trees--both hardwoods and pines--for travel corridors and diversity. Heavy deer browsing and rubbing has destroyed most of the pines planted in a single row on each side of refuge roadways.

Croplands Management

The cropland management program on Holla Bend National Wildlife Refuge has failed more than it has succeeded. The "big flood" prior to establishment of the refuge dumped 10-12 feet of sand on top of the fertile alluvial soils. This has greatly increased management costs for these lands for both cooperative farmers and the Service. More fertile lands need to be acquired if we are going to economically provide waterfowl needed agricultural and moist-soil foods.

Forest Management

There is a need to plant hardwoods in existing agricultural lands to provide diversity and travel corridors for wildlife. However, forestry techniques and expertise has not been available for this task to date. Poor soils and animal depredation on seedlings have been an insurmountable obstacle for past attempts--all of which failed.

Water Management

Pumping from deep wells is necessary and expensive for moist-soil units on the sandy soils which dominate Holla Bend refuge. However, this is a necessary management tool if we continue to manage the area for wintering waterfowl.

Minerals Management

Currently, there are no oil or gas activities on Holla Bend refuge or Logan Cave refuge. A recent find of gas deposits below the 20,000-foot level in adjacent counties will eventually lead to seismic operations on refuge lands.

Public Use Management

The refuge continues as an entrance fee area with relatively few complaints. Funds are needed to improve signing to prevent incompatible disturbance to wintering waterfowl. Also, boat ramp improvements are desperately needed. The fee areas should have some of our better facilities. Public use improvements should be annually funded if we are going to continue to collect the public's money just to enter the refuge.

Land Acquisition

Limited progress has been made but at a snail's pace. From my perspective, we need to acquire agricultural lands outside the river levee which have good topsoil rather than sand at the surface. We are missing a tremendous opportunity to manage for a significant number of wintering birds--the area adjacent to the refuge in Carden bottoms has tremendous potential.

Problems/Issues

Steve Frick and his friends continue to beat us to the punch in acquiring or leasing lands with high waterfowl management potential. They recently leased over 2,000 acres of rice fields from the farmer we were dealing with while we were awaiting funding decisions. This, plus the slow progress of acquisition within the approved boundary, has Refuge Manager Perry concerned.

The thalweg lands adjacent to the Oxbow Lake--old Arkansas River Channel--became controversial after our acquisition of the Meeks property. This caused Mr. Apple to make his contacts with former Director Greenwalt and spread malicious untruths about the process Refuge Manager Perry and Regional Surveyor Beneke were implementing to correct the situation with all involved landowners.

The amount of research or other disturbance that the Ozark cavefish can withstand is unknown. I think we need to limit the number of trips into Logan Cave for research purposes.

Water samples collected from Logan Cave for contaminant analysis by Dr. Jim Johnson at the University of Arkansas are being held in a graduate student's apartment refrigerator. The Vicksburg contaminant coordinator transferred before advising which lab the samples should be shipped to for analysis.

Summary/Recommendations

1. Do not renew the cooperative farming agreements for those farmers who did not make a good faith attempt to effectively control Johnson grass and cockleburs or meet other conditions of their special use permit.
2. Continue cleanup and organization of supplies and materials in the shop and equipment storage area.
3. Work with the ATTRA team to improve cropland management on refuge lands.
4. Take measures to reduce human disturbance to endangered bats and cavefish in Logan Cave.

Inspected By:

Sam O. Drake, Jr.
Associate Manager

11-25-91
Date

Draft Reviewed By:

Yester S. Long
Refuge Manager

12-6-91
Date

Approved By:

Harold W. Bmsm
Assistant Regional Director

12/11/91
Date



Holla Bend Bowhunters Association



November 19, 1991

Dear Mr. Perry:

The Bowhunters of this area would like to commend you and your staff for the excellent job that has been done regulating the deer season at Holla Bend Refuge the past two years.

Since the November 1st opening we feel that the quality of the bowhunt has increased greatly. When the season opened October 1st hunters experienced problems with mosquitos and if a hunter killed a deer late and had to leave it until the next morning spoilage could occur. We sincerely hope that in future years you will continue to keep the November 1st opener. Once again we would like to take this opportunity to thank you for the job that you are doing with the Archery season at Holla Bend Refuge.

Sincerely,

Bowhunters of Holla Bend
Refuge